

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 001907

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/29/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: QATAR: OUTLINE OF DRAFT NATIONALITY LAW

Classified By: CDA Scott McGehee for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. A draft law on nationality shared with the Embassy limits the number of foreigners who can be granted Qatari nationality to 50 per year. Those nationalized would not have the right to vote and their citizenship could be revoked upon the recommendation of the Ministry of Interior. The law represents no progress for women, who will not be able to obtain citizenship for a non-Qatari husband or for her children of that husband. Post proposes consultation with the GOQ on this issue. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Post obtained a copy of a draft law on nationality from an contact. The law has been drafted out of the public eye, and there has been no discussion of it in the press. The Advisory Council has not been consulted on the issue. The draft the Embassy obtained is probably nearly complete. The law is more restrictive than the 1961 law it replaces. Post has sent an informal translation of the law with NEA/ARPI separately.

¶3. (C) Original Qataris: As in the 1961 law, "original Qataris" are defined as those who lived in Qatar before 1930 and maintained their nationality and residence in Qatar.

¶4. (C) Naturalization is done by Amiri decree and is limited to 50 cases per year. The previous law specified no limit. A resident must have lived in Qatar for 25 years; previously, the period was 20 years. Other conditions remain generally the same: Knowledge of Arabic, the ability to earn a living, and having a good reputation. The wife of a naturalized citizen can be granted citizenship by Amiri decree after five years (previously, 1 year). Naturalized citizens will not have the right to vote or to hold legislative office. A naturalized Qatari is not eligible for public sector employment until five years have passed. The descendants of a naturalized Qatari will be considered naturalized; this group of citizens will not obtain rights equal to those of original Qataris.

¶5. (C) Nationality can be revoked from naturalized citizens more easily than from original Qataris. The reasons include involvement in "crimes of honor or breach of trust" and living outside Qatar for more than one year. The Ministry of Interior may also recommend revocation of citizenship if it is in the "public interest."

¶6. (C) Women's rights are not advanced by the draft law. A Qatari woman cannot pass citizenship to a foreign husband or to her children with a foreign husband. A foreign wife of a Qatari must wait five years to obtain citizenship, compared to one year under the previous law.

COMMENT AND POST ACTION

¶7. (C) The authority to grant or revoke citizenship is nearly entirely in the hands of the Amir. With specific qualifications on what would propel a prospective citizen into the ranks of the lucky 50, transparency is not well-served by this law. It is restrictive, rather than inclusive, with respect to the residents (mostly Palestinians) who were born and spent their entire lives in Qatar. Neither is it progressive on the issue of transmission of citizenship through female citizens, in contrast to recent legal changes in Egypt and Morocco. Post proposes to seek information from the GOQ about the draft law and the GOQ's plans to move the law toward final implementation.

MCGEHEE